

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

25 July 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Possibilities of Greater Militancy by the  
Chinese Communists

1. The bitter and indecisive Sino-Soviet confrontation and Khrushchev's apparent moves for a detente with the West may have increased the chances of more militant Chinese Communist actions in Asia in the near future. China's leaders may now be sufficiently perturbed to seek to discomfit Moscow or to disrupt any lessening of East-West tensions by creating new crises of some kind. We have some slight indicators of such Chinese intent, but they are by no means conclusive. Furthermore, we do not expect Peiping to take any action in the near future involving serious risk of US attacks against the China mainland; indeed, China's leaders probably consider that the increasing efforts of Moscow to dissociate itself from China have increased the chances that the US would react vigorously to a serious Chinese initiative. However, there is sufficient possibility of serious new Chinese initiatives to justify special US watchfulness at this time.

GROUP 1

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~

Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
declassification

2. The most likely areas for such Chinese action would be India and Laos, because these would seem to offer the Chinese the best chances of quick success with minimum risk.

3. India. Peiping has made no secret of the fact that Soviet military and economic assistance to India has been especially galling, as was Moscow's stand during Chinese-Indian hostilities last fall. The Chinese may increase military pressure along the Indian frontier or may occupy that part of the NEFA which they claim. In their view, with little investment or risk they could seriously embarrass Moscow by forcing it to make a public choice between Communist China or an India associated with the West. The Chinese would also expect that they could further a just national interest and impress Asia with their power.

4. Either independently or in conjunction with increased military pressures on India, the Chinese may offer the Pakistanis a number of inducements in order to gain a Sino-Pakistani diplomatic or military arrangement. This could complicate Soviet-Indian, Pakistani-Indian, and Pakistani-US relations.

5. Laos. China's leaders probably believe that the neutralist-rightist position in Laos is so shaky that considerable Communist

gains could be made by encouraging the DRV/PL to raise the level of military action, and perhaps themselves clandestinely introducing cadres and specialist units into Laos. They probably consider that such actions would not be likely to provoke extreme US action against China or North Vietnam. Dramatic Chinese-sponsored gains in Laos would considerably strengthen Chinese leverage against the Soviets and their championing of a generally less forceful course for the world's Communists. Furthermore, the Chinese probably consider that they have the USSR in a difficult position in Laos. In their view, Soviet reluctance to push the "national liberation struggle" to final victory would damage Moscow within the world Communist movement; Soviet support of the Chinese, on the other hand, would impede present Soviet efforts toward a detente with the US.

6. Other Possibilities.

a. Korea. While we believe that there is only a slight chance of an overt, Chinese-supported attack upon South Korea, it would be difficult for the USSR to remain aloof in such an eventuality. It could not allow the Chinese and North Koreans to fail in a manner which would bring a US presence close to the USSR's borders. In any event, the Chinese, with their increasing

influence in North Korea, would be quick to exploit any collapse of authority or developing revolutionary situation within the ROK -- contingencies whose likelihood, we fear, is growing.

b. The offshore islands. The Chinese Communists may demonstrate their defiance of the US and the USSR by attempting to gain the Quemoy and Matsus, without of course running extreme risks.

c. South Vietnam. Peiping may try to persuade Hanoi to change the nature of the war in South Vietnam by introducing more open DRV military support into the struggle, although we doubt that Peiping's influence or leverage over Hanoi is as yet sufficient to induce the DRV to take such action should it not wish to.

d. Actions against the Soviets or Outer Mongolia.  
A crisis of a different character could develop from a more assertive Chinese pressing of its border and historical claims against the Russians. Though unlikely, there is a small chance of such action, including even an occasional sortie by small Chinese units along the China-USSR or China-Outer Mongolia borders.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

[Redacted Signature]

SHERMAN KENT  
Chairman

25X1